CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

MANY SIMILAR ELEMENTS are present in different kinds of elections. Candidates, voters, issues, and television advertisements are constants. But, there are distinctions among the various kinds of elections as well. Compared with presidential elections, congressional elections are a different animal. Unlike major-party presidential contenders, most

candidates for Congress labor in relative obscurity. There are some celebrity nominees for Congress—television stars, sports heroes, even local TV news anchors. In 2000, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's historic senatorial campaign gained the nation's attention. The vast majority of party nominees, however, are little-known state legislators and local office holders who receive remarkably little coverage in many states and communities. For them, just getting known, establishing name identification, is the biggest battle.

The Incumbency Advantage

The current circumstances enhance the advantages of incumbency (that is, already being in office), and a kind of electoral inertia takes hold: those people in office tend to remain in office. Every year, the average member of the U.S. House of Representatives receives about $750,000 in taxpayer funds to run his or her office. Much of this money directly or indirectly promotes the legislator by means of mass mailings and *constituency services,* the term used to describe a wide array of assistance provided by a member of Congress to voters in need (for example, tracking a lost Social Security check, helping a veteran receive disputed benefits, or finding a summer internship for a college student). Having a responsive constituent service program contributes strongly to incumbency. If a House incumbent helped solve a problem for a constituent, that constituent rated the incumbent more favorably than constituents who were not assisted by the incumbent,[23] therefore providing the incumbent a great advantage over any challenger.

In addition to these institutional means of self-promotion, most incumbents are highly visible in their districts. They have easy access to local media, cut ribbons galore, attend important local funerals, and speak frequently at meetings and community events. Nearly a fourth of the people in an average congressional district claim to have met their representative, and about half recognize their legislator's name without prompting. This spending and visibility pay off. Reelection rates for sitting House members range well above 90 percent in most election years, and research shows district attentiveness is at least partly responsible for incumbents' electoral safety.[24]

Recent research also identifies an indirect advantage of incumbency: the ability of the office holder to fend off challenges from strong opposition candidates, something two scholars call the "scare-off" effect. Incumbents have the ability to scare off high-quality challengers because of the institutional advantages of office, such as high name recognition, large war chests, staffs attached to legislative offices, and overall experience in running a successful campaign. Potential strong challengers facing this initial uphill battle will wait until the incumbent retires rather than challenge him or her. This tendency only strengthens the arguments for advantages to reelection related to incumbency.[25]

The 1994 congressional elections, regarded as a year of massive change in the make-up of electoral politics, provide yet another example of the power of incumbency. The press focused on the Republican takeover of both houses of Congress, naturally enough, but another perspective is provided by the reelection rates for incumbents. More than 90 percent of the sitting representatives and senators who sought reelection won another term, despite electoral conditions that were termed a tidal wave.

Frequently, the reelection rate for senators is as high, but not always. In a "bad" year for House incumbents, "only" 88 percent will win (as in the Watergate year of 1974), but the senatorial reelection rate can drop much lower on occasion (to 60 percent in the 1980 Reagan landslide, for example). There is a good reason for this lower senatorial reelection rate. A Senate election is often a high-visibility contest; it receives much more publicity than a House race. So, while House incumbents remain protected and insulated in part because few voters pay attention to their little-known challengers, a Senate-seat challenger

■ U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy (D–MA) knows full well the advantages of incumbency. Elected to the Senate in 1962 to complete the term of his brother, President John F. Kennedy, Edward Kennedy has been reelected every term since. His name recognition and campaign war chest enabled him to handily defeat Republican challenger Jack Robinson 73 percent to 13 percent in the 2000 election.

Photo courtesy: David McNew/Newsmakers/Getty Source

can become well known more easily and thus be in a better position to defeat an incumbent. In addition, studies show that the quality of the challengers in Senate races is higher than in House races, making it more likely that an incumbent could be upset.[26]

Redistricting, Scandals, and Coattails

For the relatively few incumbent members of Congress who lose their reelection bids, there are three major reasons: redistricting, scandals, and coattails.

Redistricting. Every ten years, after the U.S. Census, all congressional district lines are redrawn (in states with more than one representative) so that every legislator represents about the same number of citizens. The U.S. Constitution requires that a census, which entails the counting of all Americans, be conducted every ten years. Until the first U.S. Census could be taken, the Constitution fixed the number of representatives in the House at sixty-five. In 1790, then, one member represented 37,000 people. As the population of the new nation grew and states were added to the union, the House became larger and larger. In 1910, it expanded to 435 members, and in 1929, its size was fixed at that number by statute.

Because the Constitution requires that representation in the House be based on state population, and that each state have at least one representative, congressional districts must be redrawn by state legislatures to reflect population shifts, so that each member in Congress will represent approximately the same number of residents. Exceptions to this rule are states such as Wyoming and Vermont, whose statewide populations are less than average congressional districts. This process of redrawing congressional districts to reflect increases or decreases in seats allotted to the states, as well as population shifts within a state, is called redistricting. When shifts occur in the national population, states gain or lose congressional seats through a process called *reapportionment*. The 2000 U.S. Census showed the largest population growth in American history. Between 1990 and 2000, the U.S. population had increased 13.2 percent, from 248.7 million people to an estimated 281.4 million people, with western and southern states (the sunbelt) gaining residents at the expense of the Northeast. This has been a trend since the 1960 Census, causing the Northeast to lose congressional seats in every recent decade.

Simulation
You Are Redrawing the Districts in Your State

Redistricting is a largely political process that the majority party in a state uses to ensure formation of voting districts that retain or expand their majority. For example, in 2003, ten Texas Democratic state senators left the capitol in Austin for Albuquerque, New Mexico, in order to break the Senate quorum necessary to pass the Republican-sponsored redistricting bill that would give Texas Republicans a sizeable majority in their state delegation to the U.S. House. At one point, state police were ordered to begin a search for any errant state senators. The efforts of the ten Democrats failed after one of them, State Senator John Whitmire, returned to the Texas Senate, believing that the Democrats were going to lose any future legal action against them. Some states, however, including Iowa and Arizona, hope to avoid this sort of political high theater by appointing nonpartisan commissions or using some independent means of drawing district lines. Although the processes vary in detail, most states require legislative approval of the plans.

This redistricting process, which has gone on since the first U.S. Census in 1790, often involves what is called **gerrymandering** (see Figure 13.4). Because of the enormous population growth, the partisan implications of redistricting, and the requirement under the Voting Rights Act for minorities to have special "majority-minority districts" in order to get an equal chance to elect candidates of their choice, legislators end up drawing oddly shaped districts to achieve their goals.[27] Redistricting plans routinely meet with court challenges across the country. Following the 2000 Census and the subsequent redistricting in 2002, courts have thrown out legislative maps in a half-dozen states, primarily because of state constitutional concerns about compactness.

gerrymandering
The legislative process through which the majority party in each statehouse tries to assure that the maximum number of representatives from its political party can be elected to Congress through the redrawing of legislative districts.

The circuitous boundaries of improper districts often cut across county lines or leap over natural barriers and split counties and long-standing communities.[28] Despite the obviously abnormal shape of many districts (including Texas's 6th district, Illinois's 17th district, and North Carolina's 12th district), gerrymandering is very difficult to prove and its interpretation often depends on partisan factors.

Over the years, the Supreme Court has ruled that:

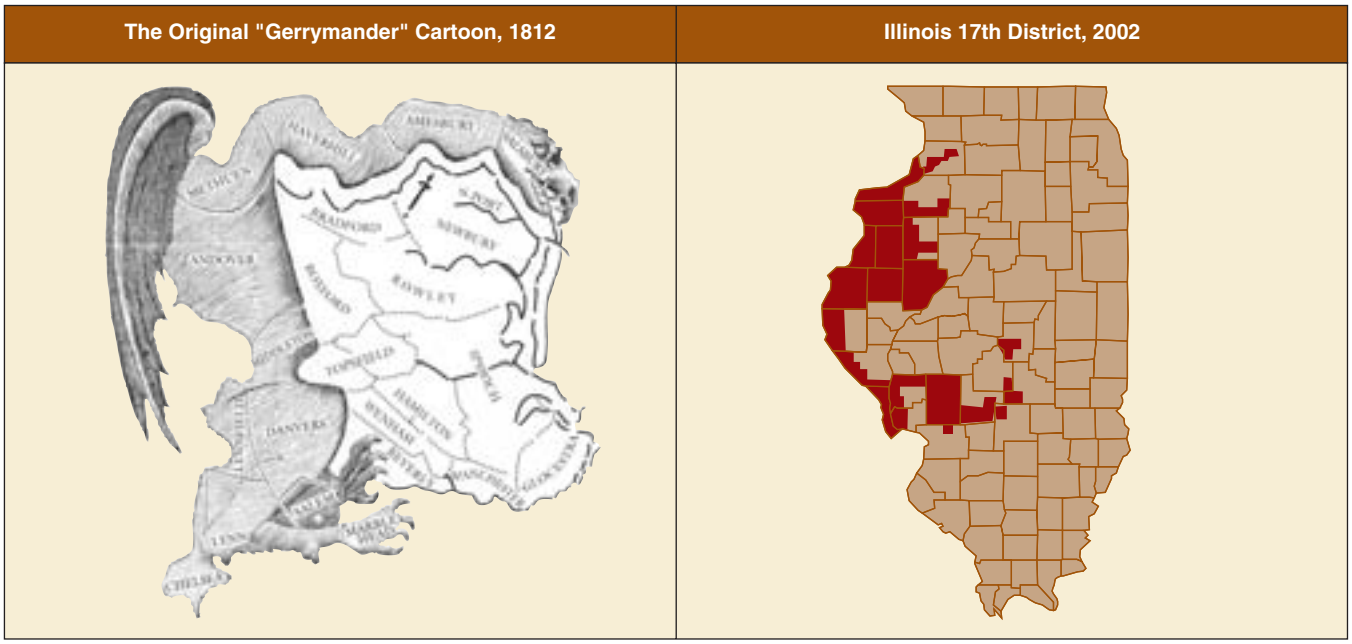
- Congressional as well as state legislative districts must be apportioned on the basis of population.[29]
- Purposeful gerrymandering of a congressional district to dilute minority strength is illegal under the Voting Rights Act of 1965.[30]
- Redrawing of districts for obvious racial purposes to enhance minority representation is constitutional if race is not the "predominate" factor over all other factors that are part of traditional redistricting, including compactness.[31]

New software has made it easier to draw more politically reliable electoral maps, which have reduced partisan contention. Until the 1990s, legislators had to draw districts using colored pens on acetate sheets spread out on large maps. Computers appeared before the 1990s, but only a few states could afford the big, sophisticated ones that could handle demographic data. Now the U.S. Census Bureau makes available digitized maps, and new geographic information systems for mapping and analyzing demographic data can draw up partisan maps automatically. These developments have changed redistricting (and gerrymandering) from an art into a science.[32] Yet, the process requires more resources and takes more time than ever.

Recent research has added yet another actor into the redistricting process: the individual member of a legislature. In an analysis of 1992 redistricting in North Carolina, Paul Gronke maintains that members' partisanship is balanced with their own ambition. He finds that "individual ambition generally outweighs partisan loyalty." If, in other words,

FIGURE 13.4 Gerrymandering

Two drawings—one a mocking cartoon, the other all too real—show the bizarre geographical contortions that result from gerrymandering. ■



Sources: David Van Biema, "Snakes or Ladders?" *Time* (July 12, 1993) © 1993, Time Inc. Reprinted by permission. Illinois General Assembly.

voting for the other party's district lines will help individual members obtain higher office, they will vote in their own self-interest over the better interests of their party.[33]

The dominant party often uses redistricting to make their incumbents safer. But redistricting can also be used to punish the out-of-power party. Some incumbents can be put in the same districts as other incumbents, or the base of other representatives can be weakened by adding territory favorable to the opposition party. In 1992, ten incumbents were paired together to compete against each other in redrawn districts—five therefore lost—and about a dozen more incumbents were defeated in part because of unfavorable redistricting. The number of incumbents who actually lose their reelections because of redistricting is lessened by the strategic behavior of redistricted members—who often choose to retire rather than wage an expensive (and likely unsuccessful) reelection battle.[34]

In one innovative study, researchers created a post-1990 redistricting model of partisan support in each congressional district by pretending all seats were open seats, eliminating incumbency as a factor. Their projections based on this model gave the Republicans twenty more seats than before the redistricting. Republicans took over dominance from the Democrats in three districts and gained dominance in seventeen districts that were previously evenly divided. When the researchers included incumbency in the model, however, strong Democratic incumbents in the newly formed districts suppressed the projected Republican gain from the new redistricting, and the parties came out even. This conclusion partially explains the Republican rise in congressional power after the 1990 redistricting. The eventual retirement of these Democratic incumbents made the next elections open in a district strongly favor Republicans. As the model predicted, Republicans won the open races. In short, redistricting along party lines obviously affects the make-up of the U.S. Congress, a fact that explains the lengths those ten Texan state senators went to stop it.[35]

Scandals. Scandals come in many varieties in this age of investigative journalism. The old standby of financial impropriety (bribery and payoffs, for example) has been supplemented by other forms of career-ending incidents, such as personal improprieties (sexual escapades, for instance). Incumbents implicated in scandals typically do not lose reelections—because they simply choose to retire rather than face defeat.[36] The power of incumbency is so strong, however, that many legislators survive even serious scandal to win reelection. One of the more famous recent political scandals is that of New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevey. In August 2004, the Garden State's first-term Democratic governor announced that he would be resigning from office effective November 15, in response to a sexual harassment lawsuit being prepared by a former security aide. Although the suit was never filed, it alleged that while working as the governor's lead homeland security adviser, Golan Cipel was the subject of improper sexual conduct and intimidating behavior by McGreevey. Cipel, an Israeli citizen, initially resigned in 2002 but was kept on the state payroll for several months afterward.

Coattails. The defeat of a congressional incumbent can also occur as a result of the presidential coattail effect. Successful presidential candidates usually carry into office congressional candidates of the same party in the year of their election. Notice the overall decline in the strength of the coattail effect in modern times, however, as party identification has weakened and the powers and perks of incumbency have grown. Whereas Harry S Truman's party gained seventy-six House seats and nine additional Senate seats in 1948, George Bush's party actually lost three House seats and one Senate berth in 1988, despite Bush's handsome 54 percent majority. The gains can be minimal even in presidential landslide reelection years, such as 1972 (Nixon) and 1984 (Reagan). Occasionally, though, when the issues are emotional and the voters' desire for change is strong enough, as in Reagan's original 1980 victory, the coattail effect can still be substantial.

Analyzing Visuals

CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION RESULTS, 1948–2004

Take a few moments to study the table, which indicates whether or not the president's party gained or lost seats in each election since 1948, and then answer the following critical thinking questions: Are there any striking patterns in the outcomes of congressional elections that occur in presidential election years? Are there any striking patterns in the outcomes of congressional elections that occur in nonpresidential (midterm) election years? Drawing on what you've learned from this chapter, how might you explain the patterns in midterm elections?

GAIN (+) OR LOSS (–) FOR PRESIDENT'S PARTY

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION YEARS			*NONPRESIDENTIAL ELECTION YEARS*		
President/Year	*House*	*Senate*	*Year*	*House*	*Senate*
Truman (D): 1948	+76	+9	1950	–29	–6
Eisenhower (R): 1952	+24	+2	1954	–18	–1
Eisenhower (R): 1956	–2	0	1958	–48	–13
Kennedy (D): 1960	–20	–2	1962	–4	+3
Johnson (D): 1964	+38	+2	1966	–47	–4
Nixon (R): 1968	+7	+5	1970	–12	+2
Nixon (R): 1972	+13	–2	*Ford* (R): 1974	–48	–5
Carter (D): 1976	+2	0	1978	–15	–3
Reagan (R): 1980	+33	+12	1982	–26	+1
Reagan (R): 1984	+15	–2	1986	–5	–8
G. Bush (R): 1988	–3	–1	1990	–9	–1
Clinton (D): 1992	–10	0	1994	–52	–9[a]
Clinton (D): 1996	+10	–2	1998	+5	0
G. W. Bush (R): 2000	–2	–4	2002	+6	+2
G. W. Bush (R): 2004	+3	+4			

[a]Includes the switch from Democrat to Republican of Alabama U.S. Senator Richard Shelby.

Midterm Congressional Elections

midterm election
Election that takes place in the middle of a presidential term.

Elections in the middle of presidential terms, **midterm elections,** present a threat to incumbents. This time it is the incumbents of the president's party who are most in jeopardy. Just as the presidential party usually gains seats in presidential election years, it usually loses seats in off years. The problems and tribulations of governing normally cost a president some popularity, alienate key groups, or cause the public to want to send the president a message of one sort or another. An economic downturn or a scandal can underline and expand this circumstance, as the Watergate scandal of 1974 and the recession of 1982 demonstrated. The 2002 midterm elections, however, bucked that trend, marking the first time since 1934 and Franklin D. Roosevelt that a first-term president gained seats for his party in a midterm election.

Most apparent from the midterm statistics presented in Analyzing Visuals: Congressional Elections Results, 1948–2004, is the tendency of voters to punish the president's party much more severely in the sixth year of an eight-year presidency, a phenomenon associated with retrospective voting. After only two years, voters are still willing to "give the guy a chance," but after six years, voters are often restless for change.

In 1994, the United States seemed to experience a sixth-year itch in the second year of a presidency, such was the dissatisfaction with the Clinton administration. To their credit, Democrats, despite the scandals that plagued Clinton's presidency, avoided a true sixth-year itch in 1998. During this midterm election, Democrats actually gained five seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Senate elections are less inclined to follow these off-year patterns than are House elections. The idiosyncratic nature of Senate contests is due to their intermittent scheduling (only one-third of the seats come up for election every two years) and the existence of well-funded, well-known candidates who can sometimes swim against whatever political tide is rising. Also worth remembering is that midterm elections in recent history have a much lower voter turnout than presidential elections. A midterm election may draw only 35 percent to 40 percent of adult Americans to the polls, whereas a presidential contest usually attracts between 50 percent and 55 percent (see Analyzing Visuals: Voter Turnout in Presidential and Midterm Congressional Elections).

As noted, the 1994 midterm elections were extraordinary, a massacre for the Democrats and a dream come true for the Republicans. Not since Harry S Truman's loss in 1946 had a Democratic president lost both houses of Congress in a midterm election, but such was President Clinton's fate. For the first time since popular elections for the U.S. Senate began in the early 1900s, the entire freshman Senate class (that is, all newly elected senators) was Republican. Moreover, every incumbent House member, senator, and governor who was defeated for reelection was a Democrat. Even the speaker of the House, Thomas Foley (D–WA), fell in the onslaught. Republican George Nethercutt became the first person to unseat a House speaker since 1862. Looking specifically at the House, Republicans scored their impressive victory in 1994 "by fielding (modestly) superior candidates who were on the right side of the issues that were important to voters in House elections and by persuading voters to blame a unified Democratic government for government's failures."[37]

Republicans had just as much success at the state level. The GOP took control of nineteen houses in state legislatures, securing a majority of the legislative bodies. From just nineteen governors before the election, Republicans wound up with thirty governorships, including eight of the nine largest. (Only Florida, which reelected Democratic Governor Lawton Chiles, resisted the trend.)

Cynics frequently say that elections do not matter, but the 1998 midterm elections effectively and dramatically refuted the cynics. A loss of just five seats for the Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives toppled a speaker, and not just any speaker of the House, but one of the most powerful speakers of the twentieth century—Newt Gingrich of Georgia. The Republicans were expected to gain seats in both the House of Representatives and, especially, in the Senate, as well as a few governorships. They, however, did not do so, for several reasons. First, Republicans had pushed hard for severe punishment against President Clinton because of the Monica Lewinsky scandal. While the public disapproved of President Clinton's embarrassing and demeaning behavior in that scandal, most Americans believed that impeachment was simply too severe a penalty. Second, the Republicans had made a strategic miscalculation by shifting into neutral governmentally; that is, Republicans accomplished virtually nothing in the second session of the 105th Congress. Their assumption was that the Clinton scandal would be enough to deliver substantial gains for the GOP, and they bet wrong. President Clinton's Democratic Party scored a moral victory by actually gaining five seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and maintaining their share of seats in the Senate. The most surprising election result of all, however, occurred on the Friday after the November 3 election, when Gingrich shocked the nation by announcing his resignation from the speakership and from Congress itself.

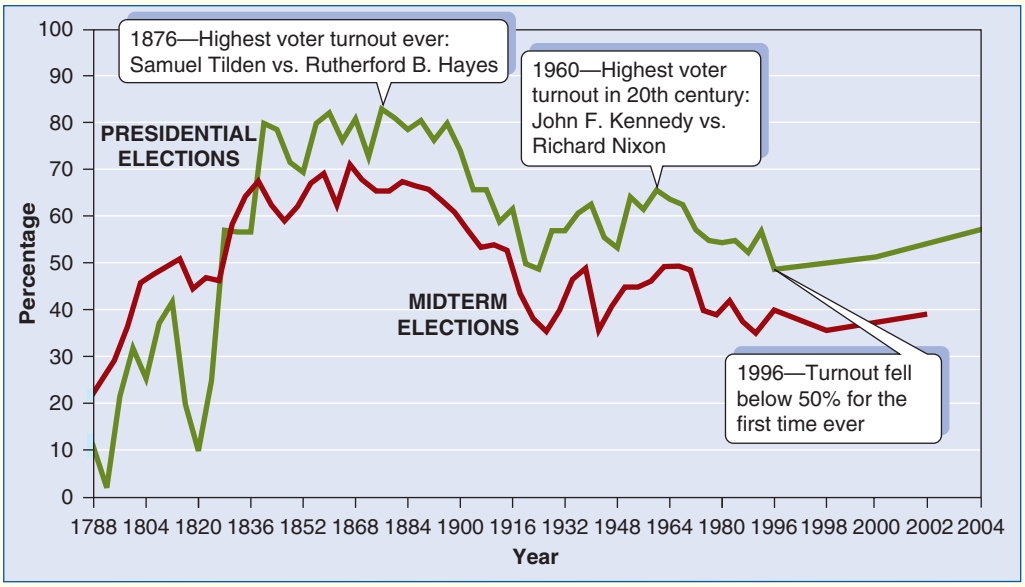
The 2002 Midterm Elections

As discussed earlier, the president's party historically loses congressional seats in midterm elections. George. W. Bush's first midterm election, however, was a remarkable exception. In the previous fourteen midterms, the opposing party had lost an average of twenty-six seats in the House and four in the Senate. It was more than a statistical anomaly, however, when the Republicans gained a handful of seats in House

Analyzing Visuals

VOTER TURNOUT IN PRESIDENTIAL AND MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Various factors influence voter turnout in the United States. The high percentages of 1876 and 1960 both occurred in open races (that is, when no incumbent was running). In the latter, the new TV debates energized and engaged the electorate. Following the historic 2000 presidential election, many anticipate high voter turnout in 2004. Take a few moments to study the graph below, and then answer the following critical thinking questions: What general trend do you notice about voter turnout during the twentieth century? What is generally true about turnout in midterm elections as opposed to turnout in presidential elections? Drawing on what you've learned from this and other chapters, why do you think voter turnout, generally speaking, increased over the course of the nineteenth century? Why do you think voter turnout declined during the twentieth century?



Source: Adapted from Harold W. Stanley and Richard G. Niemi, *Vital Statistics on American Politics, 2001–2002* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2001), figure 1-1, 12. Updated by the authors.

and Senate races. This year marks the first time since 1934 that a first-term president picked up seats in both houses of Congress. How did this occur? While there is no definitive answer, we must consider the remarkable time and energy President George W. Bush devoted to stumping for Republican candidates in key battleground states (under White House strategist Karl Rove's watchful direction). Between April and November, Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney raised more than $141 million campaigning for Republican candidates, capitalizing on Bush's approval ratings, which remained high more than a year after the September 11, 2001, terrorists attacks. Some Democrats believed that the war on terrorism and the administration's focus on impending hostility with Iraq constrained the voice of opposition by monopolizing the political agenda, preventing Democratic candidates from gaining ground on a weak economy, corporate scandals, and traditionally Democratic domestic issues. In addition, the D.C.-area snipers dominated media coverage, quite justifiably becoming a

fixture of public consciousness that eclipsed virtually all political discourse until the final twelve days before the election.

Following the 2000 election, the Senate was tied at 50–50 with Republicans holding leadership capacity because of Vice President Dick Cheney's tie-breaking vote. In May 2001, the defection of Senator Jim Jeffords of Vermont allowed Democrats to take control of the Senate by the smallest of margins, while Republicans narrowly held a six-vote majority in the House. The near parity of the balance of power in the Senate and House produced an election where even marginal gains for either side made a crucial difference. In 2002, thirty-four Senate seats, thirty-six governorships, and the entire House were up for grabs. Republicans capitalized on a late wave that expanded their House majority by six seats and regained control of the Senate, 51–49, possibly giving Bush the mandate that eluded him in the 2000 election. The Louisiana Senate election was decided in a December 7 runoff in which Democratic incumbent Mary Landrieu defeated Republican Suzanne Haik Terrell. The runoff was a result of Louisiana election law that requires winners to post fifty percent or more of the vote; Landrieu had secured only 46 percent of the vote in an election that featured nine candidates.

Consistent with historical norms, most contests tended to favor incumbents regardless of party. Only four incumbent governors lost, and only three incumbent senators who were on the Election Day ballot lost: Democrats Jean Carnahan of Missouri and Max Cleland of Georgia, and Republican Tim Hutchinson of Arkansas. (In addition, Republican Senator Bob Smith of New Hampshire was defeated in the primary.) Because many of the Republican governors elected in the 1994 GOP landslide and reelected in 1998 were restricted by term limits, Democrats were expected to make big gains in several open gubernatorial races. Wins by Republicans in heavily Democratic Massachusetts and Maryland, as well as the surprise victory of Republican Sonny Perdue over the Georgia governor, helped mute the number of Democratic increases in state executive positions, leaving the Republicans with twenty-six governorships and the Democrats with twenty-four when the dust settled.

The 2002 elections were unique not only for delivering big wins for the incumbent president, but also for the unusual and unexpected conditions that preceded a number of contests. In Minnesota, Senator Paul Wellstone, along with members of his family and several staff members, died tragically in a plane crash while campaigning on October 25, only days before the November elections. Amid the disbelief, Minnesotans desperately scanned the political landscape for a qualified replacement. Former Vice President Walter Mondale accepted the Democratic Party's appointment but lost the race to Republican Norm Coleman, who capitalized on a remarkable backlash to Senator Wellstone's memorial service, which was seen by some as a Democratic pep rally. In New Jersey, former Senator Frank Lautenberg became the Democrats' late nominee when Senator Robert Torricelli abruptly withdrew his candidacy after a wave of criticism over professional ethics made it clear that he was not likely to win the election. Following a decisive ruling by the New Jersey Supreme Court, Lautenberg was permitted to replace Torricelli on the ballot, ultimately defeating his Republican opponent, Douglas Forrester.

By and large, control by the Republicans over the two branches of elected government hastened the flow of legislative business and improved the ability of the White House to promote and control the agenda. For the remainder of the term, Representative Tom Delay (R–TX), newly elected as majority leader in the House, was able to help promote Republican legislation. Republicans must not forget, however, the lessons learned from 1994—the last time the GOP held both houses of Congress—when Newt Gingrich's overconfidence hurt the party in 1996. Under the leadership of House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, a liberal from San Francisco, Democrats are attempting to more aggressively oppose Republican economic policies.

TABLE 13.2 Results of Selected Elections, 2004

State	*Contest*	*Winner*	*Loser*	*Significance*
Alaska	Senate	Lisa Murkowski (R)	Tony Knowles (D)	Murkowski, daughter of the current Alaska governor who appointed her to replace him in the Senate, suffered from claims of nepotism but eked out a victory against strong challenger Knowles. Both candidates set the record for the most expensive race in Alaskan history.
Colorado	Senate	Ken Salazar (D)	Pete Coors (R)	Piles of money and name recognition could not counteract the bad taste that Coors's conservative agenda left in the mouths of both Democrats and moderate Republicans, who preferred the more experienced Colorado Attorney General Salazar.
Florida	Senate	Mel Martinez (R)	Betty Castor (D)	Former Secretary of Housing Martinez won by the smallest of margins against the former state education commissioner, after the two spent $40 million in television ads. Martinez joins Colorado's Salazar in a growing Hispanic presence in the U.S. Senate.
Georgia	House	John Barrow (D)	Max Burns (R)	Freshman Representative Burns lost to Barrow in a close election, giving Georgia Republicans in the House only a very slight 7–6 advantage, in spite of Georgia's increasing Republican leanings.
Illinois	Senate	Barack Obama (D)	Alan Keyes (R)	Both African Americans, State Senator Obama and former Ambassador Keyes waged a lopsided campaign. Obama, an immensely popular figure, was featured during a prime time spot at the Democratic convention. Keyes was a last-minute substitute for Jack Ryan, who left the race after it was revealed he asked his ex-wife, celebrity Jerry Ryan, to sex clubs.
Kentucky	House	Geoff Davis (R)	Nick Clooney (D)	Davis, a military veteran who lost a House election only two years before, defeated Clooney, the father of actor George Clooney.
Louisiana	Senate	David Vitter (R)	several candidates	In the Bayou State's open primary system, a candidate must garner over 50 percent of the vote in order to avoid a run-off in December. Vitter— the only Republican in the race—did just that in defeating four Democratic opponents.
Montana	Governor	Brian Schweitzer (D)	Bob Brown (R)	Schweitzer, a rancher, beat a more experienced secretary of state in the heavily Republican state of Montana by effectively campaigning to independent voters as a political outsider.
New Hampshire	Govemor	John Lynch (D)	Craig Benson (R)	For the second time in seventy-eight years, New Hampshire voters ousted a freshman governor. Lynch won among college graduates and women, who turned out in large numbers to defeat the incumbent.
North Carolina	Senate	Jim Burr (R)	Erskine Bowles (D)	In the race for the vacated seat of Democratic vice presidential nominee John Edwards, Jim Burr resigned his House seat and defeated the former Clinton chief of staff, who also lost the 2002 Senate race to Elizabeth Dole.
Oklahoma	Senate	Tom Coburn (R)	Brad Carson (D)	In what was expected to be a close race between a current and a former member of Congress, Coburn won by 12 percentage points in a state that voted heavily for Bush.
South Carolina	Senate	Jim DeMint (R)	Inez Tenenbaum (D)	Former Representative Jim DeMint, from the 4th Congressional District of the Palmetto State, benefited from Bush's strong showing to defeat the former state superintendent of education.
South Dakota	Senate	John Thune (R)	Tom Daschle (D)	Popular Representative Thune unseated Senate Minority Leader Daschle in a bitter and expensive upset. After Thune nearly defeated Senator Tim Johnson (D) in 2000, Daschle seemed weak in a state becoming increasingly Republican, making him an easy target for Thune in 2004.
Texas	House	Peter Sessions (R)	Martin Frost (D)	After redistricting in Texas, Frost's original district no longer existed, forcing the leader of the Texas Democrats in the House to run against Sessions. Both were incumbents, but district lines obviously favored the Republican candidate, who won easily.